



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
2000 NAVY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON DC 20350-2000

OPNAVINST 3120.28D
N96
4 Jan 2018

OPNAV INSTRUCTION 3120.28D

From: Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: CERTIFICATION OF THE AVIATION CAPABILITY OF SHIPS OPERATING
AIRCRAFT

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 3120.35K
(b) Helicopter Operations from Ships Other Than Aircraft
Carriers (NATO - MPP-02) (NOTAL)
(c) COMDTINST M3710.2G
(d) OPNAVINST 3100.8B

Encl: (1) Waiver Guide and Process

1. Purpose

a. To issue procedures and delineate responsibilities for the formal inspection and certification of shipboard aviation facilities and aircraft operating envelopes.

b. This revision captures a major command addition to responsibilities that includes the United States Coast Guard (USCG) as they operate under the same guidance of the aviation certification program as Commander, Military Sealift Command (COMSC). This instruction is a complete revision and should be reviewed in its entirety.

2. Cancellation. OPNAVINST 3120.28C.

3. Scope. This instruction applies to all ships whose mission includes the conduct of flight operations.

4. Background. Certification is a process established to verify:

a. Shipboard aviation facilities are installed, available, and operated according to approved plans and procedures.

b. Safe operating envelopes for wind and ship motion are established. Both are essential to the proper, adequate, and safe conduct of flight operations.

5. Discussion. Many aspects of air and surface warfare have changed over the years, bringing about various naval ships and aircraft configured for different purposes. Differences in missions and capabilities dictate a wide variety of shipboard aviation facilities and operating envelopes. The type and number of ships capable of conducting flight operations have resulted in the need for formal, standard certification procedures to provide the maximum safe environment for both aircraft and ship's personnel.

a. The primary objective of the shipboard aviation facility certification process is to validate (by inspection) the facilities, equipment, and their operating capabilities for proper, adequate, and safe conduct of manned flight operations. Therefore, all procedures, documentation, and technical guidelines must reflect the level, class, and type requirements defined in reference (a) and follow the ship's manned aviation mission as established by the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO).

b. The primary objective of the aircraft operating envelope certification process is to establish and validate by flight test, analysis, or simulation the complete wind and ship motion envelopes for safe aircraft operation.

c. All aviation capable ships must have certified manned aviation facilities with certified aircraft operating envelopes. It must be noted that the certification of a ship's manned aviation capability does not constitute authorization to conduct air operations. Authorization to conduct air operations is the responsibility of fleet commanders; COMSC; Commandant United States Coast Guard (COMDT COGARD); or Chief of Naval Research (CNR), as applicable.

d. Certification of manned aviation facilities is required to ensure safe conduct of helicopter operations on Navy vessels. Aviation facilities certifications for U.S. Military Service helicopters are listed in reference (a).

(1) Reference (b) is the helicopter interoperability information for military helicopters from North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or other allied nations on U.S. Navy vessels.

(2) Reference (c) designates the United States Navy as the manned aviation certification agent for USCG.

(3) Reference (d) outlines the requirements for deck landing operations by civilian helicopters with civilian pilots on U.S. Navy vessels.

(4) An aviation facility certification waiver request is required to conduct operations on uncertified flight decks or with a particular type or model aircraft not included in the vessel's certification. Enclosure (1) provides waiver guidance and flow diagram. All waiver requests will be submitted to the fleet commanders who will evaluate and determine the proper routing for final approval or disapproval.

6. Action

a. Commander, Naval Air Systems Command (COMNAVAIRSYSCOM) or program executive officer (PEO) will:

(1) Establish responsibilities, procedures, and technical guidelines for mandatory facility and operating envelope certifications based on three distinct types of aviation capable ships:

(a) Aircraft carrier nuclear

(b) Amphibious aviation (amphibious assault ships, general purpose and multipurpose (landing helicopter assault, landing helicopter deck)).

(c) Air capable (all other naval ships from which manned aircraft can takeoff, land, and routinely receive or transfer personnel and materials).

(2) Assign responsibilities to subordinate naval activities to achieve and support the objectives of certification.

(3) Provide technical guidelines, personnel, data, and funding for the support of formal inspection and flight test programs associated with manned aviation capability certifications.

(4) Coordinate funding to support dynamic interface testing for each manned aviation capable class of ship from which new or existing aircraft are planned to operate.

(5) Ensure that proposals for modification of the certification criteria are processed per the applicable reference document.

(6) Procure equipment to support the manned aviation systems required for certification. Provide installation guidelines to support shipboard manned aviation capabilities at or above certification standards.

(7) Approve all manned aviation facility design and modifications before installation to ensure that the objectives of existing and projected aviation facility certification standards will be achieved.

(8) Maintain direct liaison with fleet commanders, COMSC, COMDT COGARD, and CNR on certification matters.

b. Commander, Naval Sea Systems Command (COMNAVSEASYS COM) or PEO will:

(1) Procure equipment to support the ship systems required for certification. Install, modify, and maintain all shipboard facilities and associated equipment to support shipboard manned aviation capabilities at or above certification standards.

(2) Provide personnel, data, and funding for support of formal inspections of COMNAVSEASYS COM cognizant equipment associated with manned aviation capability certifications.

(3) Budget ship construction, Navy funds to support dynamic interface testing for manned aviation capable lead ships of each class, and subsequent follow-on ships as appropriate, where baseline class changes have affected the ship's flight deck characteristics.

c. Fleet commanders, COMDT COGARD, COMSC, and CNR will:

(1) Establish responsibilities and procedures necessary for mandatory certification of all ships with manned aviation facilities within the technical guidelines issued by the COMNAVAIRSYSCOM. Certification must be subject to periodic review at intervals determined by COMNAVAIRSYSCOM.

(2) Authorize manned aircraft operations aboard ship to meet established and special mission requirements.

(3) In cases where certification is not possible without inordinate operational disruption, authorize on a case-by-case basis operational waivers to manned aviation certification. Certification criteria waivers must be granted for a specific period of time and must not abrogate safety considerations. In any case, the waiver period must not exceed 1 year from the date of waiver authorization. Follow-on waivers must not be granted until an appropriate inspection of the manned aviation facilities has been accomplished and corrective measures initiated.

(a) For ships operating under waivers, corrective measures must be included in the list of repairs or alterations to be accomplished during the next major yard availability period. The priority for accomplishing these alterations will be established following the Fleet Modernization Program.

(b) Copies of all waivers issued must be provided to COMNAVAIRSYSCOM and to COMNAVSEASYS COM.

7. Records Management. Records created as a result of this instruction, regardless of media and format, must be managed per Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) Manual 5210.1 of January 2012.

8. Review and Effective Date. Per OPNAVINST 5215.17A, Chief of Naval Operations, Weapons and Sensors (OPNAV N96C) will review this instruction annually on the anniversary of its issuance date to ensure applicability, currency, and consistency with Federal, Department of Defense (DoD), SECNAV, and Navy policy and statutory authority using OPNAV 5215/40 Review of Instruction. This instruction will be in effect for 5 years, unless revised or cancelled

in the interim, and will be reissued by the 5-year anniversary date if it is still required, unless it meets one of the exceptions in OPNAVINST 5215.17A, paragraph 9. Otherwise, if the instruction is no longer required, it will be processed for cancellation as soon as the cancellation is known following the guidance in OPNAV Manual 5215.1

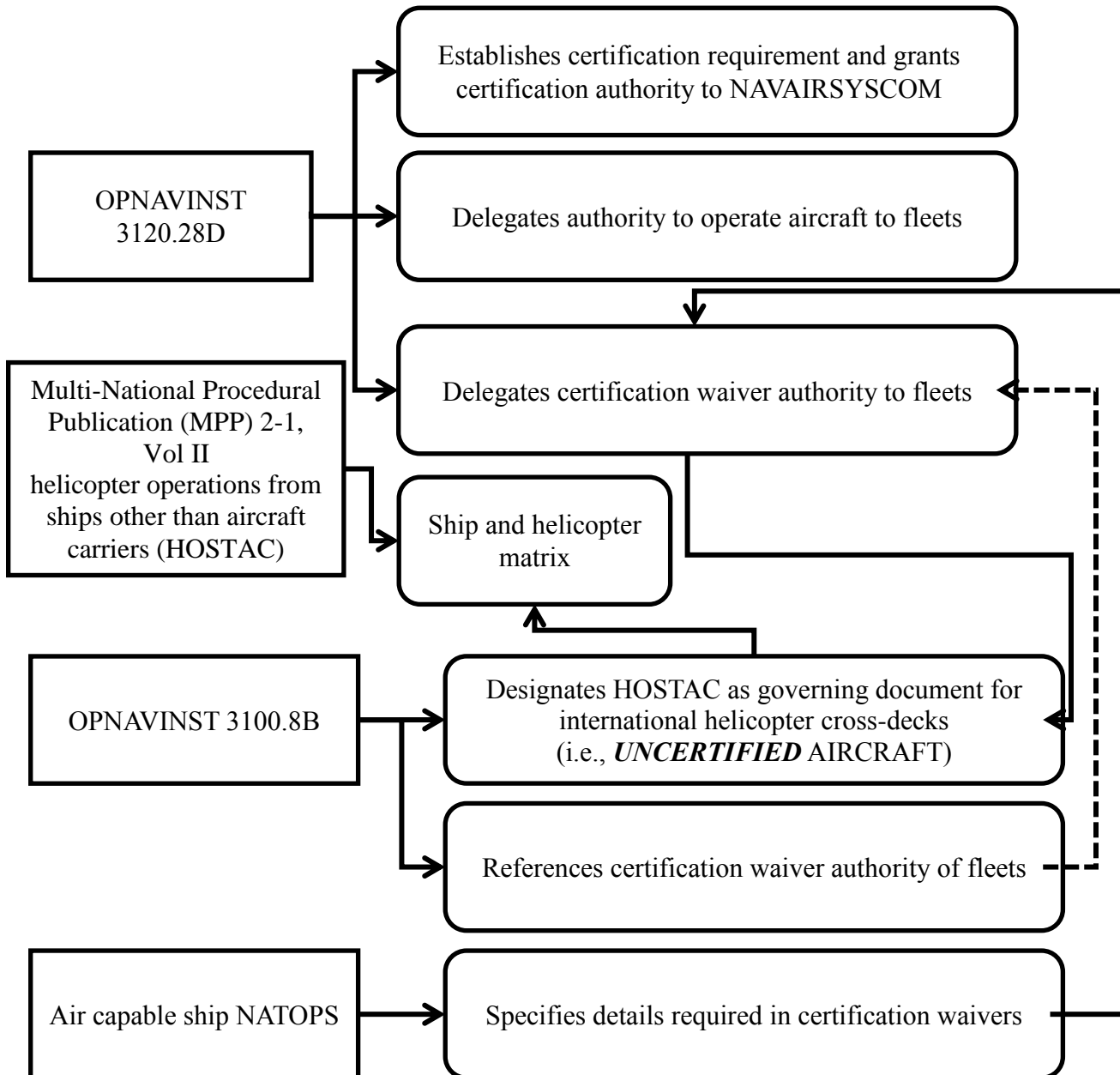
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. A. Boxall', with a stylized, cursive script.

R. A. BOXALL
Director, Surface Warfare

Releasability and distribution:

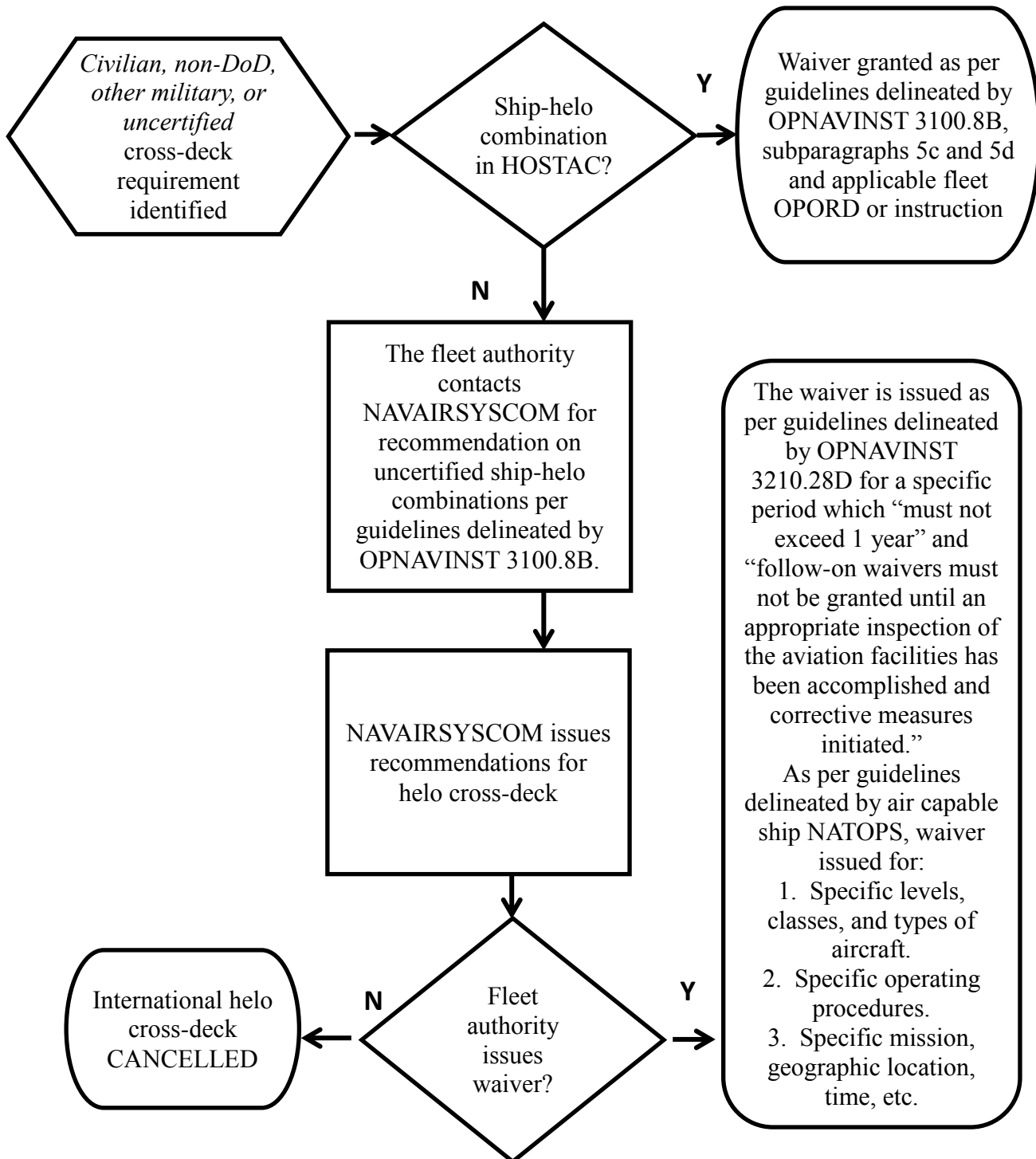
This instruction is cleared for public release and is available electronically only via Department of the Navy Issuances Web site, <http://doni.documentservices.dla.mil/>

WAIVER GUIDE AND PROCESS



Note: Naval Air Training and Operating Procedures Standardization (NATOPS) program.

WAIVER PROCESS



Note: helicopter (helo); operation orders (OPOrd)